

REMARKS

The foregoing Amendment after Final and the following Remarks are submitted in response to the Final Office Action issued on March 11, 2005 in connection with the above-identified application.

Claims 1, 2 and 7-17 are pending in the present application as amended.

Claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter of claims 3-6 and such claims 3-6 have thus been canceled. Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter has been added to the application by the Amendment after Final. Further, Applicants respectfully submit that the Amendment after Final should be entered inasmuch as the Amendment raises no new issues and requires no further searching, and inasmuch as the Amendment is believed to place the application in condition for allowance.

The Examiner has again rejected claims 1, 2, and 7-17 under 35 USC § 103(a) as being obvious over Putt (U.S. Patent Application No. 2003/0097296). Applicants respectfully traverse the section 103 rejection insofar as it may be applied to the claims as amended.

Independent claim 1 recites a computer-readable medium having stored thereon computer-executable instructions for performing a method in connection with an organization having a plurality of entities. The method is for acquiring a resource for at least two of the entities. In such method, a centralized agent of the organization receives a request for the resource from at least two of the entities and reviews each request for the resource. A vendor capable of supplying the resource of the requests to the organization is selected, and the centralized agent designates at least one individual from the organization to work with the selected vendor in developing and supplying the resource of the requests.

The centralized agent and the designated individual produce a single qualified request to be submitted to the selected vendor, the qualified request is submitted to the selected vendor, and an agreement with the selected vendor is produced regarding terms by which the selected vendor agrees to supply the resource of the qualified request to the organization. The centralized agent reviews the produced agreement in view of the qualified request and approves same, and the selected vendor thereafter undertakes to develop and supply the resource of the qualified request according to the approved agreement. The centralized agent monitors the progress of the selected vendor according to the produced and approved agreement.

As may be appreciated based on the specification of the present application, by employing a centralized agent to perform resource acquisition, a large organization such as a large corporation with many constituent entities may centralize such resource acquisition and gain efficiencies thereby. In particular, it is oftentimes the case that more than one entity within an organization requires the same specific resource, and yet each entity acquires such same specific resource from a different vendor at a premium price. With the present invention, then, resource acquisition requests are centrally received from each of the entities and assessed, and at least one particular favored vendor is selected to supply the particular resource to all of the requesting entities within the organization.

Independent claim 1 as amended also recites that, in the course of reviewing each request for the resource, the central agent aggregates similar requests for concurrent handling, considers other non-requesting entities that can be expected to make a similar request, determines whether any necessary information has not been provided by the requesting entities in the request, and if so returning the request to the requesting entity for

same, and determines whether the request is invalid, and if so returning the request to the requesting entity. That is, the central agent in such central role is especially well positioned to perform such recited tasks.

As was previously pointed out, the Putt reference discloses a system whereby a project including a plurality of activities and qualifications is defined and a Request for Proposal (RFP) is prepared from the project definition and forwarded to a plurality of service providers. Proposals are received from prospective service providers and ranked based on evaluations of past performance of the prospective service providers. At least one of the prospective service providers is selected to perform the project, and terms of performance are negotiated with the prospective service providers.

Thus, Applicants again point out that the Putt system is disclosed as being a project management system, and thus organizes and manages performance of a project. In contrast, the system of the present application is not a project management system but instead is a resource procurement system for ensuring that multiple entities of an organization acquire resources therefor in an efficient and cost-effective manner. Such Putt reference therefore cannot be applied to make obvious the claims of the present application for the simple reason that the Putt reference is directed to an entirely different type of system.

In particular, inasmuch as the Putt reference is directed toward a project management system, such Putt reference would not disclose or suggest that in acquiring a resource for at least two entities of an organization, a centralized agent of the organization should or could receive a request for the resource from at least two of the entities and review each request for the resource, as is required by claim 1. Specifically, such Putt reference would not disclose or suggest that, in the course of reviewing each request for the resource,

the central agent should or could aggregate similar requests for concurrent handling, consider other non-requesting entities that can be expected to make a similar request, determine whether any necessary information has not been provided by the requesting entities in the request, and if so returning the request to the requesting entity for same, and determine whether the request is invalid, and if so returning the request to the requesting entity, all as is required by claim 1.

Quite simply, the Putt reference would not disclose or suggest such matters because such matters are not normally aspects of project management systems. Likewise, project management systems do not normally require a central agent in a central role to perform such recited tasks.

At any rate, and again, the Putt reference does not disclose or suggest that a centralized agent produce a single qualified request based on the requests from the at least two entities to be submitted to the selected vendor, as is required by claim 1, or that the centralized agent act for the at least two entities in reviewing a produced agreement in view of the qualified request and approving same, and monitoring the progress of the selected vendor according to the produced and approved agreement on behalf of the at least two entities, as is required by claim 1.

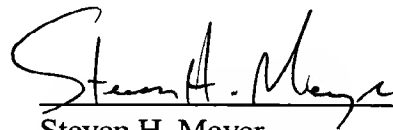
Accordingly, and for all the aforementioned reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the Putt reference cannot be applied to make obvious the subject matter of claim 1 or any claims depending therefrom, including claims 2 and 7-17. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the section 103(a) rejection.

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**PATENT
REPLY FILED UNDER EXPEDITED
PROCEDURE PURSUANT TO
37 CFR § 1.116**

In view of the foregoing Amendment and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application including claims 1, 2, and 7-17 is in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested.

Date: May 25, 2005

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven H. Meyer", is written over a horizontal line.

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